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OIR/DEF CONTRIBUTION TO NIE-32:

EFFECTS OF OPERATIONS IN KOREA ON THE  
CHINESE COMMUNIST REGIME

May 17, 1951

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH  
Division of Research for Far East

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SECRETI. POLITICAL EFFECTSA. Disagreement Among Party Leaders

The Korean conflict, by isolating Communist China from the West and driving it to closer dependence on the USSR, has reduced to an academic question speculations regarding the existence of a "Nationalist" and an "Internationalist" clique (for which there is no firm evidence one way or the other) within the Chinese Communist Party. On the other hand, it is probable that dissatisfaction with the course of events in Korea has accentuated certain points of disagreement within the Central Committee arising from disputes over the party's fiscal and economic policies, the postponement of reconstruction efforts, and the intensification of police measures in favor of a more moderate political program. Underlying these points of dispute is the question of Mao's "learning to one side" policy

But despite these personal disagreements with party policy,

a combination of factors -- the common interest that party and military leaders have in maintaining a united front, the strength of party organization, the highly centralized party control over the country's economic and military resources, and the narrowing of China's choice between alliance with the USSR and contacts with the West -- have all contributed to strengthening positive support for the party's present foreign policy by the higher political and military echelons of the Chinese Communist regime. Chang Kuo-t'ao, expelled

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from the Communist Party in 1938, has asserted recently that while differences may be assumed to exist over China's alliance with the USSR, individual leaders can still cooperate though holding different views on different problems. Not until the current course is discredited and domestic stability is seriously jeopardized can one expect the emergence of factors creating a possible cleavage between party leaders.

The prospect for the occurrence of basic disagreements and cleavages among the higher political and military echelons of the Chinese Communist regime arising out of developments in the Korean war are slight. The USSR has shown no signs of declining to place its military resources at the disposal of the Chinese Communist regime as a reserve of strength upon which the latter can ultimately draw if areas more intimately associated with its existence than Korea were attacked. As long as the Chinese Communist leaders have this assurance from Moscow they will probably accept, with little significant dissonance, whatever develops out of the Korean fighting.

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**B. Effect on Popular Support**

It is difficult to isolate the Korean conflict from the complex of factors determining popular attitudes toward the Chinese Communist regime. The Korean conflict has been rarely, if ever, presented officially as a "foreign" issue, separate from the domestic scene, and the regime has sought to integrate the "aid-Korea" movement with its domestic political and economic program. Large segments of the population, principally in rural areas, probably have not yet consciously associated the war with the local problems with which they are most concerned; consequently, Korea probably remains to many an abstraction only vaguely comprehended.

Among the more politically aware groups, however, concentrated mainly in urban areas, the conflict has aroused a more definite, although mixed response. The available evidence indicates that, although some individuals privately have hoped that a Communist defeat would solve their difficulties, the most general and immediate reactions to the Chinese intervention and early victories were feelings of national pride evoked by impressions of a China restored to leadership rank in the Far East. The subsequent lack of military progress has quieted but not dispelled this exultation for even a successful holding action by Chinese troops against an array of strong Western armies has been viewed as a triumph compared to the long series of past Chinese humiliations. Communist propaganda concern about defense against the designs of Western powers bent on "invading" China has probably also gained some acceptance among these groups who have been most sensitive to foreign encroachments. The charge that the US is following in the footsteps of Japan and is resurrecting Japanese militarism

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appears to have achieved some effect even among those persons not inclined ordinarily to accept Communist propaganda. The student class as a whole seems to have exhibited the most enthusiasm regarding the Chinese role in the war.

On the other hand, doubts have arisen among the more educated and politically articulate groups, caused by feelings that the Korean adventure has jeopardized domestic reconstruction. There are also some reports that misgivings about the regime's pro-Soviet alignment and distrust of the USSR's intentions relative to the Korean situation have arisen among otherwise ardent supporters of the regime, including some party members.

The possibility that the Korean conflict may be merely a preliminary phase of a larger war is undoubtedly recognized by many in these groups, including some non-Communists who probably hope that, as a result, the regime will either be replaced or be forced to follow a more temperate course.

It is probable that in spite of Communist controls over the public information media, some knowledge of the Chinese losses in Korea has reached the general public (reports claim that some Chinese casualties of the Korean war have been transferred as far south as Canton). Presumably this knowledge has created either fearfulness or, in the case of anti-Communists, hopefulness, although firm evidence of specific effects is lacking.

Viewed in the larger sense, the domestic impositions and sacrifices which have coincided with the Korean war have made an adverse impression on the country even though these increasing hardships have not yet been correlated in the public's mind with the Korean war. In the rural areas, conscription,

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conscription, production quotas, taxation, militia, and similar duties, and the greater reliance on force and suppression have all fostered dissatisfaction. In the urban areas, too, many of the same demands of the mobilization program have been felt heavily. In this indirect manner, therefore, the Korean war has contributed to a decrease in the degree of popular support for the regime, but this decrease does not yet constitute a serious threat to the regime's stability.

C. Effect on the Regime's Ability to Cope with Hostile Internal Forces

While intervention in Korea has required the regime to modify important phases of its planned political program, the regime has both the manpower and administrative machinery to continue and in fact step up the tempo of its efforts to consolidate control of the country. Its ability to cope with hostile forces has been demonstrated by the actual reduction, during the period of the Korean campaign, of active guerrilla-like elements

Coincident with its aggression in Korea the regime also has broadened its suppression of alleged "internal enemies" who are regarded as seeking to dislocate China's domestic program and to undermine the People's Democratic Dictatorship in concert with American and Kuomintang agents. Ex-Kuomintang personnel and persons formerly associated with the Nationalist Government are a principal target of Communist repression. All available evidence indicates that Communist efforts to exterminate and paralyze potentially hostile elements have become increasingly pervasive and effective.

Repressive measures -- aimed at punishing espionage, sabotage, conspiracy, subversion, collusion with "imperialists," instigating revolt and resistance, forgery and smuggling, harboring criminal elements, rumor-mongering, "and

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mongering, "and other crimes with counter-revolutionary purposes" -- have been reinforced by positive steps to strengthen the police and public security systems, to centralize and expand militia units, and to increase popular membership in the Communist-directed "people's organizations." These latter groups, an essential instrument of Communist control, not only function as surveillance and self-policing organs but they serve to fractionalize society and break up centers of potential opposition. Along with these measures the regime has steadily circumscribed the authority and power of non-party elite groups whose military and political services are no longer required. Moreover the recent declaration by a high party leader that the Chinese Communist Party "...is at present making preparations to carry out a systematic and all-out reorganization of the party organization" suggests that the regime's effort to weed out unreliaables will extend with greater force than heretofore to the party itself.

As a result of these measures the regime has not only cut down active opposition but it has increased its ability to cope with potentially hostile forces.

#### D. Effects on

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D. Effect on Sino-Soviet Relations

Perhaps the most obvious effect of the Korean war on the foreign relations of the Chinese Communist regime has been the further estrangement of the regime from the West and a concomitant increase on the USSR, a dependence which Moscow has studiously emphasized. Since the outbreak of the Korean war a number of developments which indicate that relations between Moscow and Peking face at least, become increasingly amicable.

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In the diplomatic sphere, there has been a close coordination of Chinese and Soviet positions and propaganda "lines" with respect to Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. Chinese Communist broadcasts continue closely to support Soviet views on such issues as the Japanese peace treaty. Stalin's self-interview of February 15, which was obviously intended to stiffen the Chinese Communist attitude on Korea, was promptly answered by a Chinese Communist editorial calling for an intensification of efforts in Korea. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communists continue to be shown a deference at formal diplomatic functions much greater than that accorded the diplomatic representatives of the Eastern European satellites.<sup>1</sup>

In the cultural and ideological sphere there have been similar signs of efforts to strengthen the ties between Soviet Russia and Communist China.

Articles by Chinese Communist leaders have appeared with increasing frequency

in Soviet journals;

1. The Chinese Communist embassy reception at Moscow, celebrating the first anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, for example, was attended by a galaxy of high Soviet officials, including two members of the Politburo and the full higher levels of the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

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in Soviet journals;<sup>1</sup> the highest Soviet awards in the field of culture have been bestowed on Chinese citizens;<sup>2</sup> Soviet professors have been appointed to posts in Chinese Communist universities; and the membership and activities of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association have been expanded.<sup>3</sup>

In the military and economic sphere there has been evidence of efforts to integrate Soviet and Chinese planning and operations. In December 1950, a top-level Sino-Soviet planning commission was reportedly established for the purpose of controlling and allocating strategic resources.<sup>4</sup> In March 1951, a further integration of economic and military operations was achieved by the signing of a Sino-Soviet railway agreement, hailed by the Pei-p'ing radio as a further step toward the full implementation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of February 1950.<sup>5</sup>

Although the bulk of existing evidence would indicate that the course of Sino-Soviet relations has remained smooth, there are some indications that the economic and military cost of waging a protracted war in Korea may have generated certain strains in these relations, evidences of which are as follows:

- (1) Information stemming from Anatoli Shabshin, former Soviet Vice-consul at Seoul, suggests that Mao was extremely reluctant to  
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commit Chinese troops to Korea and that Mao is not completely trusted by the Kremlin. [REDACTED]

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- (2) [REDACTED] indicate that the Chinese Communist leaders were divided on the issue of intervention, and that the strongest voice in favor was that of a Soviet adviser.

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- (3) Chinese Communist diplomats [REDACTED] said that the Chinese Communists accepted Soviet arms and money, but did not accept Soviet orders.

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(4)

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(5)

are "much concerned" over the cost to them of the Korean venture and were curbing hostilities only under Soviet pressure. [REDACTED]

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(6)

Pei-p'ing and Moscow have disagreed on the conduct of operations in Korea -- the Chinese favoring a slow war of attrition, the Soviets advocating an all-out offensive. [REDACTED]

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While certain strains probably have developed out of the Korean war, there is no firm indication that they have yet become serious enough to threaten the solidarity of the Sino-Soviet alliance or to diminish Chinese Communist efforts in Korea. Both the Chinese and the Soviets have a common interest in driving US forces from Korea. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the Chinese Communist intervention was prompted simply by Soviet promises and pressures. There exists an equally strong presumption that Chinese Communist action was prompted at least in part by motives of self-interest -- namely, a fear of US attacks on Manchuria, coupled with a chauvinistic and expansionist drive

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toward territorial aggrandizement and in part by a genuine desire to further world Communist interests in the Far East, perhaps with a view toward increasing their own regional leadership role.

A clear indication of the present Chinese Communist attitude toward the Korean war was provided by the recent article of P'eng Chen, a member of the Chinese Politburo, published in the Cominform bulletin of April 27, and rebroadcast by the Chinese Communist radio on May 3. P'eng indicated clearly that the Chinese Communists regard the Korean conflict not merely as an isolated war of self-defense, but also as an integral part of the global struggle between the forces of world Communism and the forces of imperialism, led by the "chief enemy," the US. As long as the Chinese Communists remain committed to this "subjective" view, and as long as they continue to subordinate considerations of economic reconstruction at home to the more general aims of world Communist expansion, there is little prospect of a serious weakening of their present allegiance to the Soviet camp.

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